

REASONS Humbly Offered  
TO THE  
**Honourable House of Commons**

For Passing the Bill for Establishing a  
*Court of Conscience in VVestminster.*

In Reply to several Papers lately distributed in opposition to it.

*First.* **T**His Bill only intends to take away Tryals by Jury, where the Cause is under 40 s. which will be a very great ease to the Subject, and save the Plaintiff and Defendant above twice the debt in arrests, putting in Special Bail, and Attorney's and other Fees in proceeding in the Marshalls Court. And the Matter may with much ease be decided by Honest Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood; and thereby the parties fairly Reconciled, to follow their Lawful callings, and consequently be preserved from falling to the charge of the Parish.

*Secondly.* The Parliament in passing this Act doth not Prejudice the Law in it's Fundamentals, but only puts a check to the Exorbitancies and Exactions of many Persons in the Marshalls Court, who aim only at Arrests and the bringing the Poor and Ignorant People into their clutches, and are much startled at this Act, fearing the Poor will thereby be relieved against their Rapine and Violence.

This Bill doth not intend to vest the power only in unlearned Shopkeepers, as is falsely insinuated by those who disparage the Judges not named, for the Parliament may if they please find Hundreds of Able and Honest Gentlemen, to reconcile such petty differences and save the mispending 5 l. to recover sometimes 30 s. 20 s. 10 s. or 5 s. and such like petty summs, which are the accustomed Fees for Plaintiff and Defendant in any such suit.

The Reasoner observes that the Bill for the Court of Conscience designs the preventing of the expence of great Summs in Petty Suits; and then speaks of the ease and quickness of the recovery in the Marshalls and other Inferiour Courts, and that upon a tender in Court the Plaintiff proceeds on Peril of Cost, but never mentioneth the Exactions and Extortions occasioned by Arrests in Inferiour Courts, which are the great Oppressions and Grievances now under consideration.

It is agreed that Juries may be challenged, or have an attaint brought against them, or the party grieved may have an appeal or new Tryal, in which cases (challenge only excepted) the remedy is worse than the disease; for the Jurors in Inferiour Courts, are such mean Persons that it is not worth while to bring an attaint, and the consequence of procuring a Tryal, where the matter is under 40 s. is obvious to every one.

Matters under 40 s. cannot meet with such difficulty as the Reasoner supposes, unless the Parliament put in weaker Judges than those who make Irrational Objections: And it is plainly evident that he or they who give their weak Reasons against this Bill, declare so much of his or their Interest in oppressing the Poor by Vexatious Suits. That every indifferent Person will conclude the Reasons answer themselves, and that the Subsequent Objections against this Bill must certainly Flow from *Southwark*, or some other place where the Persons concerned, may dread a Court of Conscience, not so much from any Real Inconvenience from such a Court, as from the Apprehensions they are under, that it may abridge their private interest.

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For his charge, that the Bill is contrary to Law, would never have been expressed (much less in Print) but by one who is so miserable a Pauper in Reason, Conscience, and Experience, as to dare to declaim against so good a work that was managed by City Law above Four score Years: And afterwards confirmed by two Parliaments in the Reign of King James the First, and made a Statute Law, which having been found of so general good to the City of *London*, the like Courts have been since granted by Act of Parliament to several other Corporations, so that further to trace this Trivial and Biassed Caviler, were to fall under the same guilt of Ignorance and Presumption, with the Reasoner, by two far discussing what hath been Enacted and commended by Supream Authority.

Upon the whole, the Persons who oppose this Bill are only as the Bill it self prays relief against; And for their Clamours, or Multiplicity of Papers, they are too dull and ridiculous to deserve an Answer, and rather argue that they depend more upon the strength of their interest than the merits of the cause.

Lastly. That this Bill is only designed to create Offices to the Managers, is false in fact, as is evident from the repeated Petitions of the Inhabitants: But granting what they say in that Point to be true, That the Register's place were worth near 300 l. per Annum, That most certainly is very inconsiderable in Comparison to the vast Sums which are extorted from the Poor by the Bayliffs and other Officers of the Marshalls Court, which upon a Modest Computation cannot amount to less than 50000 l. per Annum.

To conclude, it is humbly hoped that the Parliament upon these and many other Considerations will pass the Bill to Erect a Court of Conscience in *Westminster*; which beyond all doubt has as much need of it as *London*, *Bristol*, *Gloucester*, or any other place.